



English I

Expository Scoring Guide

April 2014

English I

Expository Prompt

Read the following quotation.

The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time you fall.
—*Nelson Mandela*

Think carefully about the following question.

Can failure make you stronger?

Write an essay explaining whether failure can strengthen a person.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your thesis
- organize and develop your ideas effectively
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Score Point 1

The essay represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- ❑ The organizing structure of the essay is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that are only marginally suited to the explanatory task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The absence of a functional organizational structure causes the essay to lack clarity and direction.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the thesis statement is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the topic, may include extraneous information, or may shift abruptly from idea to idea, weakening the coherence of the essay.
- ❑ The writer's progression of ideas is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections causes the writer to present ideas in a random or illogical way, making one or more parts of the essay unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas

- ❑ The development of ideas is weak. The essay is ineffective because the writer uses details and examples that are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient.
- ❑ The essay is insubstantial because the writer's response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the essay as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the expository purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, significantly limiting the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

Failure can strengthen a person.
Steve Jobs had ultimate failure in
highschool. He failed so much that he finally
just dropped out. He then made Apple and became
wealthy. In Rocky III Clubber defeated Rocky.
He then defeated failure and defeated Clubber.
In fourth grade I was in track and I couldn't
beat Hunter. I pushed and pushed until finally
I defeated Hunter. In fifth grade I was
a failure with girls. I pushed until I
defeated failure and kissed Holly. In
seventh grade I failed in Clark's
math class. I worked and worked until
I finally defeated Clark. Although failure
seems bad it is actually good. It makes you
strong. Like me. I defeat failure !!!
••••

Score Point 1

The writer presents a number of examples centered on the idea of “defeating failure” (Steve Jobs becoming wealthy, Rocky defeating Clubber in *Rocky III*, kissing Holly in the fifth grade). However, the writer shifts abruptly from example to example, weakening the coherence of the essay. In addition, the details and word choice are vague, causing the development to be weak. Because the writer merely repeats the same sentiment about overcoming failure without ever explaining how it can strengthen a person, the essay is confusing and difficult to follow. Overall, the essay is insubstantial and reflects a lack of understanding of the expository writing task.

Failure can strengthen a person because when some people fail at something they learn from their mistakes and try to make things right. For example if Dr Luther King Jr if he fail to give African American there equal right he would have try again, and never give up. I know that most of the people would have try again to, because failure is not a option when you fight for something wortht fighting for. Failure can also strengthen a person because when you fail to do something you'll try harder next time. Failure cause some people learn to never give up and never giving up strengthen a person. If it wasn't for failure some people wouldn't be as seseful in there life right now that's why failure can strengthen a person.

Score Point 1

In this very limited writing performance, the writer presents the thesis that some people fail, learn from their mistakes, and then “try to make things right.” Although an attempt is made to provide specific support for this idea by referencing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement, the writer offers no explanation as to what “mistakes” King made or how he learned from them. Because the example does not clearly connect to the thesis, the development of ideas remains weak. Additionally, the lack of sentence-to-sentence connections and the repetition of the phrase “never give up” disrupt the flow of the piece. A number of distracting conventions errors do not by themselves make this an ineffective response but do detract from the overall effectiveness of the writing.

Failure. I think you fail when you don't believe in yourself. When you are playing a basketball game and you don't think you can win, then you fail. People won't like you because you failed. You feel bad when you didn't win. People look at you like you are a failure.

Strong. When your strong people want to be your friends. They see you for your strength. When you are strong there are so many things you can do. You can do what ever you want in life. That's why its good to be strong. People want to be you when your strong.

So failure or strength. Which do you want more?

Score Point 1

In this essay the writer misinterprets the prompt and separately addresses being a failure and being strong (“Which do you want more?”) rather than discussing how failure can strengthen a person. As a result, the essay is only weakly linked to the prompt. Because the essay is not responsive to the specific demands of the prompt, it is insubstantial and represents only a very limited writing performance.

Failure can strengthen a person. I have experienced this myself. I've been through some rough times in the past. I did some wrong choices. The bad choices teenagers do now a days. But I have learned from my mistakes. I was weak. I didn't know how to defend myself. I let people get to me. Failure has strengthened me. If I had never failed I wouldn't be where I am at right now. I am now a strong positive person.

Score Point 1

The writer's thesis is that failure can strengthen a person. The writer briefly refers to a personal experience related to failure, but the details she provides about this experience are vague and ineffective (I did some wrong choices; I was weak; I let people get to me). The word choice is equally vague and limited. These two problems make it difficult to understand how failures have strengthened the writer or how the writer has become "a strong positive person." Overall, this essay represents a very limited writing performance.

Score Point 2

The essay represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is not always clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are only somewhat suited to the expository task.
- Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the writer's thesis statement is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of an effective thesis or the writer's inclusion of irrelevant information interferes with the focus and coherence of the essay.
- The writer's progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is minimal. The essay is superficial because the writer uses details and examples that are not always appropriate or are too briefly or partially presented.
- The essay reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the expository purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may not contribute to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, weakening the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.

Failure can make people stronger by helping them never give up. Everyone who has ever been great has at some point failed in their lives. Failure can inspire, teach, and motivate someone to become a stronger person.

When a person fails, they learn what they do wrong, and they also learn how they can fix it. Failing can teach people that failing is a part of achieving success. And once people know this, they can continue along their path to success.

When someone fails and they know just how close they were to success, this motivates them. To these people failure only helps them want to succeed even more than before. And it is this outlook that results in success.

Failure can make people stronger by inspiring them and helping them learn from their mistakes. It is these mistakes that make people one step closer. Failure is just one of the steps to success.

Score Point 2

The writer offers the thesis that failure can make people stronger by helping them never give up. The writer then attempts to explain two ways in which failure can help people achieve their goals: by teaching them that failure is part of success and that failure can motivate them to succeed. Although the writer attempts to make a distinction between these ideas by placing each idea in a separate body paragraph, the similarity between them makes the development somewhat repetitive. For example, in paragraph two, the writer's point is that once people know that failure is part of success, "they can continue along their path to success." In paragraph three, the writer states that "failure only helps [people] want to succeed even more than before." The writer also repeats this same idea in the conclusion ("Failure is just one of the steps to success"). In addition, the writer's presentation of ideas is somewhat formulaic in that each paragraph consists of three sentences. Overall, this essay represents a basic writing performance.

Failure is going to happen, and should always make you stronger. Failure can very much make you stronger but it can just as easily tear you down. Some people don't take it as easily as others and will give up because of it. That shouldn't happen, you need to understand that failing happens but you should learn from failure. Failing should make you want to try again just to get it right. It should motivate you to work 10 times harder.

When Nelson Mandela says "The greatest glory of living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time you fall." he is stating how much greater it is to achieve from fail than to give up. When you fail a test or a grade that should motivate you to study harder and retake it than to sit there, give up, and take the grade. When an athlete doesn't make a team they should want to practice, get better and prove people wrong. That they can do it. Giving up from a fail will get you nowhere in life.

Being so afraid to fail that you don't even try isn't a way to live. Because then you'll be living with those failures and the regrets of not trying at all.

Score Point 2

In this basic writing performance, the writer presents the thesis that "failing should make you want to try again just to get it right. It should motivate you to work 10 times harder." The writer provides some minimal development in support of the thesis (failing a test and an athlete who does not make the team). However, the progression of ideas is not always controlled because wordiness and weak sentence-to-sentence connections cause minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. Progression is also weakened by a lack of meaningful transitions. For example, in paragraph two, the writing becomes "jumpy" because the writer moves from the Mandela quotation to the student example to the athlete example without clearly threading these ideas together. In addition, the word choice is general and does little to contribute to the clarity of the essay.

Motivation is the outcome of failure in my eyes. When you fail at something, that should be your cue to motivate to try again till you get it. My motto has always been "If your not first your last." Once again nobody is perfect.

"Every expert was once a beginner," says Babe Ruth. Babe Ruth didn't get baseball right off the back he practiced sometimes failed but failure motivated him to be one of the greatest baseball players to step on a baseball field.

The Apollo missions took until the 8 mission to make it. A failure after another but motivation kept them going. Seven times and they kept going that's determination on another level. The scientists behind the missions were not going to the road get bumpy. "Success was the only option, failure's not," says Eminem.

Lance Armstrong won several Tour de France. Then he was diagnosed with several cancers. Everyone thought failure was coming through his head, but come back to win seven more Tour de France.

Not everybody can be Babe Ruth or be in a Apollo mission or be Lance Armstrong. These legends are not perfect they failed at one time in the careers and definitely throughout there lifes. Let motivation over power failure, it can take you a long way.

Score Point 2

The writer uses a formulaic five-paragraph structure as the basis for writing the essay. In the first paragraph of this essay, the writer establishes the thesis that failure motivates people to try again until they succeed. The writer uses three unrelated examples—Babe Ruth, the Apollo missions, and Lance Armstrong—to attempt to develop this thesis. The paragraphs about Babe Ruth and the Apollo missions minimally support the thesis since both are about overcoming initial failure. In the Lance Armstrong paragraph, however, the writer fails to provide a clear connection between overcoming cancer and overcoming failure. In addition, the writer is unable to build depth from paragraph to paragraph because of the absence of transitions. Without meaningful connections between ideas, it is not clear how these ideas relate to one another. The ideas remain in three separate clusters, causing the development to be superficial and limiting the thoughtfulness of the essay. In addition, sentences are at times only partially controlled and weaken the effectiveness of the response. Overall, this essay lacks focus and reflects a basic writing performance.

Failure happens everyday in life. If its at school on a test. Or with sports on a football field. Everyone is going to fail at least once in their life. I think failure can make you stronger. If you fail a test the first time. You will be studying harder or longer which will make you stronger in that class. Or if its on the football field. And you miss a pass during a game. You will practice harder on catching the ball. Then you could win the next game with a touchdown. Which would make you stronger in that sport. I think if you fail once you are going to try harder. So you will be better and stronger the nex time you do it. Otherwise if you didnt fail at all you would never get any stronger at the thing your doing. I think failure will always make you stronger long as you try the next time even harder than what you did the first.

Score Point 2

In this basic writing performance, the writer’s thesis is that everyone will fail at least once in life, but failure can make a person stronger. To support this idea, the writer presents two scenarios—failing a test and missing a pass on the football field—but the presentation of these scenarios is too brief to be considered more than superficial. Although the writer establishes that overcoming failure in these instances leads to the general benefits of studying or practicing harder or longer, he does not provide specific details that would clarify what he means. This lack of explanation demonstrates that the writer has only a limited understanding of the expository writing task. In addition, the word choice is more general than specific, and sentence fragments create minor disruptions in the fluency of the writing.

Score Point 3

The essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are adequately suited to the expository task.
- The writer establishes a clear thesis statement. Most ideas are related to the thesis and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. The essay is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- The writer's progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the flow of the essay and show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is sufficient because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and appropriate, adding some substance to the essay.
- The essay reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. It reflects an awareness of the expository purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the essay.

Many people often live in fear of Failure and denial. Failing to accomplish something can make some feel inferior, but failure doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing. It is important to face failure in order to become stronger and learn from our mistakes.

In my Elementary School we used to have a Spelling bee contest. Fourth grade I didn't win but I was determined to win by Fifth grade. By studying every night and being focused on winning, I was able to make it to the last round. Thanks to my hard work and determination I was able to win First place.

While some people's mistakes are small and they are able to overcome them quickly, others face more denial and bigger failure. Ben Affleck, for example, faced a lot of failure and denial. In his early career he would face a lot of denial in his auditions and failed many times to be cast as the lead role. But this didn't stop him from following his dreams. By learning from his mistakes and his determination, he finally reached his goal. Not only is he a famous director, actor and producer, but his films have won many awards.

In the end it is not important to succeed from the start. What counts is facing failure and being able to learn from your mistakes and to keep trying.

Score Point 3

In this satisfactory response, the writer provides the clear thesis that it is important to face failure in order to become stronger and learn from mistakes. The writer develops the idea that “failure doesn’t necessarily have to be a bad thing” by presenting two different examples that clearly connect to the thesis. In the second paragraph, the writer details how her own failure at a spelling bee became a motivating force. The writer uses a meaningful transitional sentence at the beginning of paragraph three to connect this personal anecdote to the example of Ben Affleck, whose experiences in becoming successful in the film industry represent the same kind of failure, except on a larger scale. Because the writer links these examples and includes details that are specific and appropriate for each, she is able to add some substance to the essay. In addition, a good control of sentences and command of conventions strengthen the presentation of ideas.

Failure can be disappointing; however, positive things can come from failure.

It is hard to get back up after a fall, but falling can teach lessons and make the person who fell even stronger. For example, the first time I tried to ride my unicycle I could not even go two feet, but I kept on trying. Every time I fell I learned something new; I learned I have to wear shoes when riding, I learned I couldn't go too fast or too slow, and I learned that determination is important for accomplishing goals.

Also, failure encourages people and gives them determination to be successful. The first day I went to summer cross country practice our captain said, "Unlike last year, we will not miss going to state by a few measly points." The team was encouraged to run their best because they knew what failure felt like, and the team desperately wanted to experience success. Failure promotes hard work because it makes people want to have success instead of failing again.

Although failure is heart-breaking, coming back from failure builds character. Failure teaches lessons and makes people more determined to succeed.

Score Point 3

The writer states the thesis in the last sentence of the essay: "failure teaches lessons and makes people more determined to succeed." He individually addresses the effects of failure through two personal anecdotes, an approach that is appropriate and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The details the writer uses to develop the anecdotes about learning to ride a unicycle and running cross-country are appropriate to the explanatory task and add some substance to the piece. Although the anecdotes are connected in that they are both about the writer's personal experiences with failure, the essay would benefit from a stronger transition connecting the two. Nevertheless, the essay progresses logically from idea to idea, and the writer establishes a clear expository tone throughout. The student's control of sentences, purposeful use of dialogue in paragraph three, and clear word choice also contribute to the effectiveness of the essay.

Failure, an everyday occurrence which so many people try so desperately try to avoid. The fact of the matter is though, every human being will experience it in their life, it's gonna happen. Now when it does, you have a choice to make. Do you let it eat at you constantly, or do you move on?

People think that all failure does is tear you down and make you a weaker, typical stereotype. Experiencing failure is something that can strengthen you, and make you better because of it. Some say that the best way to learn is from past mistakes, and I agree with them. If you have a life experience and it didn't turn out good, don't dwell on it, take it and learn from it. It will make you stronger for it in the end.

Failure is a lesson of life, and not a sign to give up. If you fail once, think about why you failed last time, fix it, and come back at the task later. Athletes everywhere face failure everyday. Whether it's a missed ground ball or free throw or a high snap. They all happen eventually, but the thing with them is, those mistakes don't make them want to quit, it makes them want to fix it. Where as a lot of people fail once and they're done.

Everything about failure depends on how you look at it. Do you see it as a stepping stone to build or a wrecking ball tearing you down. It's your choice to make. So don't ask yourself what if I fail, ask yourself what am I gonna do to get stronger when I do?

Score Point 3

In the second paragraph of the essay, the writer establishes the clear thesis that experiencing failure can strengthen people and make them better. To support this thesis, the writer first takes a philosophical approach, explaining that all human beings experience failure that they can learn from; he then links this philosophical idea to the concrete example of athletes using their failure (“a missed ground ball or free throw or high snap”) to fix their mistakes and improve their performance. The writer demonstrates some thoughtfulness in the conclusion, recognizing that “you” can choose to use failure “as a stepping stone to build” yourself up rather than as a “wrecking ball” to tear yourself down. Although some sentence-boundary errors are evident, they create few disruptions in the fluency of the writing and do not adversely affect the overall clarity of this satisfactory essay.

Nelson Mandela once said "The greatest glory in living lies not in never failing, but in rising every time you fall". Society tells us to never accept failure, but they forget that failure can strengthen a person.

We are sent mixed signals all our lives. Society tells our generation that we can't fail; we must be perfect. Society also tells us to learn from our mistakes. How can someone make mistakes and never fail? They don't.

Some of the most successful people in the world thrived from a mistake. So don't tell me that I can't fail. I can take a failure and learn from my mistakes and come back better than before.

Nelson Mandela lived by that motto. He became the first African American president for South Africa. If he can do that, why can't I be a NASCAR driver, or space woman, or Navy SEAL? I can.

I will make many mistakes in my life. I will also continue to fall short of perfect. But that's okay, because Nelson Mandela fell short of perfect too.

Score Point 3

The writer of this satisfactory performance uses the quotation from Nelson Mandela as a springboard to discuss how failure offers people the opportunity to grow stronger. The sentence-to-sentence connections are generally controlled, and the student establishes a clear expository tone from the beginning of the essay. The writer organizes the response around society's contradictory views regarding the way her generation deals with failure (young people are expected to be perfect but at the same time learn from failure). In the third and fourth paragraphs, the writer uses the examples of successful people and Nelson Mandela to explain that all possibilities are open to her despite her own personal failures and imperfections. However, the development of these examples could be more specific. For example, the writer does not explain how Mandela lived by the motto of learning from mistakes or how those mistakes helped him become the first black president of South Africa. Nevertheless, the essay overall reflects some thoughtfulness and a good understanding of the expository task.

Score Point 4

The essay represents an accomplished writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is clearly appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is skillfully crafted because the writer uses organizational strategies that are particularly well suited to the expository task.
- The writer establishes a clear thesis statement. All ideas are strongly related to the thesis and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. By sustaining this focus, the writer is able to create an essay that is unified and coherent.
- The writer's progression of ideas is logical and well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer's train of thought easy to follow.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is effective because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and well chosen, adding substance to the essay.
- The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing or to connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of the essay. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.

Failure. Such a word provokes emotions that we associate with self-pity, unimportance, seclusion, and even embarrassment. The term failure is often viewed as a negative unavoidable aspect of life, and threatens to destroy a person's self-confidence. However, this is not why failure exists. Failure strengthens and propels you to achieve success.

For instance, the iconic Wright Brothers, famed and credited with the success of the airplane, were prone to failure. On more than one occasion, they crashed their prototypes, hardly achieving more than two seconds of flight. The brothers were also known to quarrel every now and again, frustrated with the results of their numerous tests. Despite any bickering or destroyed prototypes or failed plans, the Wright Brothers rose above their failures and learned from their mistakes. In fact, their failures would prove to ultimately be what strengthened them, for in 1903 the brothers were ecstatic when they successfully built and flew the world's first aircraft.

These two innovative pioneers of the world of technology demonstrated the truth that failure leads to success and strengthens you. They achieved the incomprehensible idea of man flying, even when they failed over and over again. Because they found the capabilities to learn and adapt to failure, they became stronger. This message they left behind in their legacy urges all of us to not use our shortcomings as excuses, but to be strengthened by them and overcome challenges.

Score Point 4

In this concise, accomplished essay, the writer establishes the clear thesis that failure is not a negative aspect of life that threatens to destroy self-confidence; instead, it “strengthens and propels you to achieve success.” All ideas focus specifically on the story of the Wright Brothers. In paragraph two, the writer provides a specific summary of the failures and difficulties the Wright Brothers overcame to successfully fly the world’s first aircraft. A transitional sentence at the beginning of paragraph three strongly connects this historical example to an explanation of why the Wright Brothers function as good role models for overcoming failure. This paragraph reinforces the thesis without simply repeating it, adding depth to the essay. In addition, the writer’s purposeful word choice and sentences, as well as the strong command of conventions, contribute to the quality of the explanation. Overall, the writer demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository task in this thoughtful essay.

"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Such are the lyrics of Kelly Clarkson's song "Stronger," which is all about overcoming failures. Like her, I believe that failure can actually make a person stronger.

I have some first-hand experience with failure. In fact, I experienced almost nothing but failures in Algebra I in eighth grade. Math has always been my weakest subject, so when Algebra I rolled around, I was set up for failure. My quiz grades were ghastly. My test grades were horrific. I couldn't even do the daily warm-up problems. Somewhere along the line, my mom decided she didn't want to see fifties anymore, so she sent me to lunch tutorials with my teacher. After every grade I made, I would go straight to my teacher to review my mistakes and get a better grasp of the concepts covered. Within weeks, I believed that maybe I wasn't so bad at math after all. By the end of the year, I had an "A" in Algebra I, and even better, I was awarded the Sophocles Award by my teacher. That award was for the most hardworking and determined student. It showed that despite all my failures, I still pulled through in the end.

Similarly, a cartoon character showed that same determination in the face of failure. Naruto had always been considered a loser by his fellow ninjas, especially his rival, Sasuke. He'd always been chasing after Sasuke but had been unable to best him at anything. He didn't give up, though. He trained for hours on end after each new defeat. He didn't let his growing reputation as a failure put him down. He worked hard, and one day, he got what he wanted most — acknowledgement as a worthy rival by Sasuke.

When you believe in a dream hard enough, failure won't be enough to stop you from realizing that dream. In fact, failure will only add more fuel to the fire of your determination.

Score Point 4

In the final sentence of the essay, the writer provides a clear thesis that failure will only add more fuel to the fire of one's determination. The writer provides two different examples to address this idea. The anecdotal example about his personal difficulties with Algebra I is well crafted in that the details he includes serve as in-depth support for the thesis. The writer's second example, which is focused on how the cartoon character Naruto overcomes failure, adds to this support. Although unrelated on the surface, these two examples are conceptually related to the thesis that determination is necessary in the face of failure. Strong sentence-to-sentence connections both within and between paragraphs reinforce the writer's logical progression of thought and enhance the flow of the essay. The sentences are varied and well controlled, and the writer's word choice is precise and reflects a keen awareness of the expository task.

We have all tasted the bitterness of failure. The burning sensation of having tried so hard, only to not succeed. However, this temporary shortcoming has been known to inspire. Failure only makes success that much sweeter when it happens.

In the country of South Africa, segregation still existed, not too long ago. Known as apartheid, it was a troubling time for South Africa. Constantly Blacks were treated cruelly and unfairly. However, some would not let this stand. Soon, riots and protests began. Often, the riots would be stomped out, many people taken into custody or killed. Every time this would happen though, the temporary failure would only remind people what they were fighting for and strengthen their resolve. Eventually this led to the ending of apartheid in South Africa.

Failure is an armor or a sword that can either shield you or stab you. For some, they cannot get over the sting of it and let it destroy them. For others they take it and harness it. They embrace it. If you make it yours, it cannot hurt you. Once you have accepted it, it only makes future failures sting less, and triumphs feel greater.

In fact, it has been an evident theme throughout history. Countless times rebellions have failed or been crushed, only to rise again, stronger from their defeat.

However, failure is still failure. You should always strive to succeed. If others have failed before you, learn from their mistakes. Failure is not a loss, just a delayed success.

Score Point 4

In this unified and coherent essay, the writer uses the Nelson Mandela quotation as a starting point for a thoughtful discussion of the practice of Apartheid in South Africa. The explanation of how the defeat experienced by protestors strengthened their resolve and led to victory clearly connects to the thesis that failure is only a temporary shortcoming that “makes success that much sweeter when it happens.” In paragraph three, the writer skillfully uses a metaphor (“Failure is an armor or a sword that can either shield you or stab you”) to introduce the idea that how people choose to react to failure is ultimately a choice. This skillful transition to a more philosophical discussion demonstrates that the writer is able to connect ideas in interesting ways. In addition, purposeful and precise word choice is evident throughout, contributing strongly to the quality and clarity of the essay.

One of the biggest truths in life lies in the phrase "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." But is this really true? Can your weaknesses strengthen you? Or will they just build and build until they smother you completely? Well, either one of these things can be true, but it depends on you to pick the outcome. It depends on how hard you fight, on how hard you want to keep being strong, because the only way to truly enjoy the taste of success is to have swallowed a mouthful of defeat. Failure can strengthen a person by showing them how to rise when they have fallen.

Learning from your mistakes is an inevitable process of life. Take into example, when a baby is first learning to walk. They will take a few steps, then fall. But they must learn how to get back up, or else they will be sitting there forever. They will push and pull and wiggle and roll until they're back on their feet. Then they start all over again. Now imagine another baby who is also learning to walk, but his mother is always there, always catching him before he falls. He will learn to walk, but never to fall. And the first time he does fall and his mother isn't there, he doesn't understand. He cries and doesn't know how to get back up because this has never happened before. He never got to experience all the little failures and all the ways to get back up. So the first time he falls, it is monumental and he doesn't want it to happen again. See, because real strength isn't in how many times you haven't fallen, it's in how many times you've fallen and gotten up again.

Failure is hard. It's hard to accept. But it's even harder to learn from. We don't want to accept our faults. We don't want to admit that we did something wrong. But if you have the strength to recognize your imperfections and then change them to better yourself, that is what learning from your mistakes is about. Don't be ashamed of the chances you took that might not have turned out so well. Push yourself to take away a lesson from those chances, do it better next time, and try to live by the phrase "Live and learn."

Score Point 4

The writer begins the essay by presenting the ambiguities surrounding the role of failure in our lives. She then states her own belief that "failure can strengthen a person by showing them how to rise when they have fallen." To provide specific support for this thesis, the writer contrasts the hypothetical experiences of two babies learning to walk. Although the writer describes these scenarios in the same paragraph, the progression of ideas is logical because she uses a meaningful transition to connect them (e.g., "Now, imagine another baby who is also learning to walk..."). Specific and well-chosen details about the lessons each baby learns add substance to the essay. The student connects ideas in interesting ways, and the piece is unified and coherent because strong sentence-to-sentence connections make the writer's train of thought easy to follow. In addition, the introduction and conclusion enhance the depth and effectiveness of the essay.